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*By the Potomac.*

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# BY THE POTOMAC

AND OTHER VERSES.

BY

HENRY COLLINS WALSH.

Published in honor of the Centenary of Georgetown  
College, 1889, and in aid of the  
Building Fund.



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## PREFACE.

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*A preface is always difficult to write, and generally unnecessary; but some books, and this little volume is one of them, must needs have an APOLOGIA. Now that "unconscious absorption appears to be accepted as an excuse for literary speculation, I should very much like to unconsciously absorb a preface written by my poet-friend, Maurice Egan, for his volume of "PRELUDES," published to aid in the rebuilding of the University of Notre Dame, for it exactly explains the raison d'être of this small volume. I will satisfy myself, however, with merely quoting a particularly apt part of the preface in question. "The author of 'PRELUDES' is like certain exiles of sunny Italy. He pipes with a purpose. He says to you, 'Listen to my music, if you will; but, if you will not, at least drop something into my hand.' In this manner, which he flatters himself is very delicate and ingenious, he calls attention to the cause for which his book is published—a cause which should enlist the best efforts of every man who knows the value of education in shaping the destinies of his race."*

*I can point to these as my sentiments exactly. My verses are offered as a gift to Alma Mater upon her one hundredth birthday; they are, for the most part, reprinted from*

*the "College Journal," and were, with a few exceptions, written during the rare "hours of idleness" of a student's life at Georgetown. I hope that many of the old boys, as well as other friends of the College, will be glad to have them in a collected form—especially when the object for which they are published is considered, for the proceeds are to be divided between the Alumni Centennial Subscription and the College Journal Building Fund. And if this little book shall aid in putting some finishing touch upon that noble pile of buildings which has sprung up "by the Potomac," its end and object shall have been accomplished.*

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*BY THE POTOMAC.*

I sit by thy banks, murmuring river,

O river of endless song !

Where the waving trees in the sunlight

Throw their shadows deep and long :

And the sun sinking down in its splendor

Casts a hush o'er the ending of day,

And all nature is lulled by thy tender,

Low-murmured, musical lay.

There's a note from thy lullaby rising .

That strikes a lost chord in my heart,

And woos out a rush of old feelings

That from innermost recesses start.

As the stars in the darkness of evening,  
When the sun hath long set 'neath the hill,  
Yet catch his smiles in their twinkling  
And sparkle with sunshine still,  
So my heart retains a lost gladness,  
That hath bloomed, and hath shed its good seed,  
Though forgot is the hand of the giver,  
Yet still doth it cherish the deed.

Life's sunshine is weaved from small sun-beams,  
As the seashore is made from the sand ;  
A smile in an hour of darkness—  
A word—a warm grasp of the hand—

All these never die, but are cherished  
By a heart that is yearning for light,  
For they gleam in the shadows of sadness  
As diamonds shine out in the night.

O Life ! thou dost flow as this river,  
Now rippling in sunshine along,  
Now battling 'mid rocks and dark shadows,  
Now bursting again into song :

---

Flowing ever and out in the distance,  
Until merged in the infinite sea,  
As life is merged in the endless,  
And time in eternity.

Who knows—far across the deep ocean  
Where life's waves wash up on the shore,  
Their crests may still gleam with the brightness  
Caught up in the journeys of yore.

Over there may be gathered Time's treasures,  
Safe hoarded from evil and strife,  
And heaven be bright with the sunshine  
That a heart garners up during life.

*THE GOLD OF LOVE.*

Some are there, spending greedy lives in toil,  
That store their gains in a deep-hidden place,  
And let the bright gold dull, the jewel spoil  
In idle darkness. These shall find no grace  
With men, nor poet's praise, nor woman's love.  
No tears shall rain upon the upturned face  
Of the dead miser ; nor flowers bloom above  
His grave ; nor death blot out his life's disgrace.

But thou who hidest in thy heart the gold  
Of love, a worse than miser thou ! Oh, spend  
Affection's coin ! Let not the rust and mould  
Feed on it ; let its glorious lustre lend  
Its glow to earth and blend it with the sky ;  
It buys life's bread, let no one starve and die !



*ECCE HOMO !*

For long the world has strained its eager eyes  
In search of Truth, and yet with little gain ;  
For wrapping self in cloudy mysteries,  
And peering inward, makes the searching vain.

So, long ago, when Truth with patient trudge  
Walked o'er the ungrateful earth until it stood  
A guiltless culprit 'fore a sinful judge—  
While heaven wept o'er man's wild cry for blood—  
Pilate, the judge, looked in Truth's shining eyes,  
And, troubled, bowed his head to earth and said :  
“ What is truth ? ” Impatient, worldly wise,  
Dared not to wait for answer—turned and fled.

O World ! *Behold the Man—the Truth !* not understood  
By pride of mind or heart, but by the meek and good.

*FALSE SACRIFICE.*

The dying day upon the hills  
Lay fondly, crimsoning the west ;  
And came the solemn hush that fills  
All nature with the peace of rest.

From out the mellow, chastened light  
A songster, dropping from the sky,  
Filled that sweet pause 'twixt day and night  
With a glad flood of melody.

The song was balm to vague unrest ;  
Upon a poet's ear it rang,  
And in his heart the bird he blessed  
That lulled his sadness while it sang.

For he who listened nurséd long  
A sorrow, dry-eyed, through the years,  
But with the magic of the song  
The sorrow melted into tears.

But all unconscious sang the bird,  
Nor knew the meaning of its song ;  
And deep within its soul was stirred  
As with a stinging sense of wrong.

For thus it thought : “ What use am I ?  
I sing a song none care to hear,  
And if I live, or if I die,  
Who will rejoice, or shed a tear ?

“ I will be useful, I will give  
My life to which good seems denied ;  
Will feed one hungering who will live  
To bless me that I lived and died.”

So flew the simple thing away,  
And at the break of morning speeds  
To join the birds that hunters slay  
Amid the arrow-pointed reeds.

A flock swift rose, it followed far,  
Till in a huntsman's range it came,  
Then, like the dropping of a star,  
It fell beneath his deadly aim.

The huntsman stooped to reach his prey,  
But anger flushed his face with red,  
He flung the gay-plumed bird away,  
“ 'Twas only fit for song,” he said.

\* \* \* \* \*

O, foolish singer ! death's swift dart,  
But brought thy self-made sorrow rest,  
The song that cheered a sorrowing heart  
Is hushed forever in thy breast !

*A SONG.*

There is a fair land far away  
    'Neath gold and azure skies,  
Where dreamy brooklets laugh and play,  
    Singing sweet lullabies.

In tufted dell, and in ferny grot  
    Low breathe the fondest sighs.  
There joy is queen, and sorrow dwells not,  
    But only glad memories ;

And tender looks, and dimpled smiles  
    That are born in the blush of May,  
And all the artful, loving wiles  
    That woo the heart away.

Life's care and sadness are hid from sight,  
No tear that of sorrow doth speak,  
But only the pearly dew-drop bright  
That lies on the lily's cheek.

And, O, this fair land, far away,  
'Mid the realms of love it lies !  
And a tender gleam of its glorious day  
I catch in a maiden's eyes.

*TEARS, IDLE TEARS.*

To walk among the happy autumn fields,  
To hear the rustling of the wind-stirred leaves,  
To feel the sunshine circle round the heart,  
And yet within the eye an idle tear !

But nature mourns not ; it is thou, O man !  
Who casts thy shadow o'er the bending grain  
Of happy fields. The sunny smile of spring  
Hath rippled into laughter 'mid the corn ;  
Yet somehow, standing 'mid the fruits and gifts,  
Amid the wealth and splendor of the fall,  
Tears rise, sad tears for something past and gone.  
And Laureate of England, would ye know  
What means this silent flow of idle tears  
“ When looking o'er the happy autumn fields,  
And thinking of the days that are no more.”

Ah, down, far down, amid the deep-welled tears  
There lies an answer for their flowing, it  
Is this: We see the early bloom of spring  
Hath blushed into its fullness in the fall;  
We see the harvest ripened from the seed,  
The early promise into fruit fulfilled;  
But we, ah! we—some seed that God had sown  
Within our hearts, when life and hope were young,  
Uncared, untended, withered in its bud.

Oh, poor scorned seed of days that are no more,  
We weep above thy wasted promise now,  
Tears, idle tears, though burning with hot shame,  
Can warm thy withered roots to life no more;  
While through the rustling woodlands breaks a sigh,  
“Too late! too late!” oh, idle foolish tears!



*THE ROSEBUD AND THE ROSE.*

'Mid a garden of roses that tremblingly shook  
    Their incense in the air,  
That raised to each comer a fond, shy look,  
    I walked with two women fair.

And one was a beautiful rose full blown,  
    A queenly woman she :  
The other a slender maid scarce grown,  
    A dream of the rose to be.

To the glorious, queenly woman I gave  
    A full-blown, exquisite rose ;  
But for the maiden sweetly grave  
    A shy rose-bud I chose.

She smiled, but on the roses rare  
    She turned a longing eye ;  
The woman stuck the rose in her hair,  
    But she looked on the bud with a sigh.

*A FANATIC.*

A young knight made his battle cry—  
“ I'll fight the evil till I die.”

And forth he rushed with heedless might  
To do his battle for the right.

And recklessly he laid about,  
And ruthlessly, and felt no doubt,

But blindly struck whate'er he saw  
That seemed to him to have a flaw.

At length a doubt came to his mind ;  
He paused, and turned, and looked behind !

Alas, too late he understood,  
How deftly mingles ill with good.

With swimming eye, with reeling brain,  
He saw the good that he had slain.

Himself seemed evil to him now,  
And then he thought upon his vow.

And lo, the warrior lay at rest  
With his own dagger in his breast !

*CHILDHOOD.*

Sweet days, dear days that cannot last !  
Whose innocence but brings us pain,  
When 'mongst these ashes of the past  
Flowers fade that ne'er will bloom again.

Yet would you quaff the font of youth,  
Its simple faith and trust retain ?  
Then drink of innocence and truth,  
And all its gladness will remain.

But no, you scorn the lowly mark,  
For poorest jewels of the day,  
You dig, and delve in caverns dark,  
And throw the sunshine all away.

Oh fool ! you see, but cannot clasp  
The fruits that crown an idle boast,  
They turn to ashes in your grasp,  
These apples of a Dead Sea's coast.

And you whom fleeting glory moves  
Must stand some day before God's throne,  
And at His feet lay gifts He loves,  
Not those your pride has longed to own.

Not gifts of mind men prize so high,  
Nor wealth, nor fame, these fade and go.  
From out His palace in the sky  
What cares He for the pomps below ?

The little pomps that fade with death,  
The idol that but turns to rust,  
The spark fanned by a wanton breath,  
You cannot lift them from their dust.

A childish heart unto Him bear,  
And simple faith, and modest worth !  
A nobler gift, a dearer care,  
Than all the treasures of the earth,  
To Him, the Saviour, meekly mild,  
Who bid thee be a little child !

*“SURSUM CORDA.”*

“Lift up thy heart to God,” poor erring man !  
That it may catch the sunlight of strong faith,  
So that the shadows of thy many doubts  
May not o’erweave it with a shrouded gloom.  
Learn thou a lesson from the queen of night,  
Who, when she turns her fair face to the sun,  
Glow down on earth the radiance of her glance,  
And gladdens all she smiles upon : but when  
She bathes not in the rippled waves of light  
Her face is hidden by night’s dusky veil.

How many men, oh God, have turned from Thee !  
And lose Thy light to wander in the gloom  
Of shadows that their own dark doubts have raised ;  
And in the darkness seeing no ray, cry out,  
“There is no light,” and tearing from their hearts  
The still faint image of their God, give voice  
To tear His image from the shrines of men.

Yet these, some style the teachers of mankind,  
Who would drag all men from the light unto  
The dreary darkness of their own despair.  
Because their eyes are blinded with their doubts,  
They cry exulting, "Lo ! Christ's Church is dead,  
A relic of a superstitious past."

And what, for faith, would they give unto man ?  
Naught but despair, and woe, and awful doubts ;  
Make life the all in all, and then curse that.  
And if perchance they stumble on some truth,  
Yet wanting light, know not what they have found,  
But only blindly hint as to the shape.  
So mixing little good with evil, teach  
The empty doctrine of a clouded mind.

Sursum Corda ! Lift up thou thine heart  
Above the doubtings of poor groping men,  
And in God's light, learn thou the worth of life ;  
For on its seeming slender thread hang joys  
And blissful raptures thou can'st never dream ;

And all thine acts, for evil or for good,  
Fall on eternal scales. Would'st thou have God  
Be merciful, have mercy on thyself!  
For thou dost hold the measures of thy doom.

When clouds do lower, then lift high thy heart !  
God's light will drive the shadows far away.  
Lift up thy faith, and sow thou now within  
The furrows of thy heart the seeds of life.  
Sow on, in days of darkness and of light !  
And trustful, leave the reaping to thy God ;  
Fear not, if here or there some blight appear,  
Some spot that smiles not 'neath a hidden wrong,  
Unto its Maker offer up thy heart,  
And He will take the gift Himself has made,  
And tend it in the garden of His grace,  
Where shadows fall not, but the seed shall ripe  
Within the sunshine of His mighty love  
To yield a harvest of eternal fruit.

*THE POET AND THE LARK.*

A lark sang out in the free, blue sky,  
In the glory of the morn,  
High mounting on wings of ecstasy,  
Up, up from its nest in the corn.

A poet passed 'neath the lark as it sang,  
And caught its rapturous cry,  
And in his soul an echo rang  
'Till it broke in melody.

\* \* \* \* \*

Poet and bird are dead many a day,  
But that sweet-echoed lay will live long ;  
For death may bear the singers away,  
But he cannot hush the song.

The lark's note in the morning air  
Still rings as free and brave ;  
And the poet's echo lingers there,  
'Mid the glories of his grave.



*LIFE AND DEATH.*

Now lo, cold winter yields its silent ghost,  
    Again with waken'd life the woodlands ring,  
Back with the sunshine comes the feathered host  
    To revel in the smiles of new-born spring.

The iced fingers of the frost unfold  
    The eager streamlets from their long embrace,  
Who sing above the pebbly paths of old  
    The long-stored music of their resting place.

I love, O spring, thy radiant, sunny skies—  
    Yet 'mid the joyous life thy smiles impart,  
An envious, shadowed thought will sometimes rise,  
    Which finds an echo in my saddened heart.

What tho' thy breath bids dormant nature live—  
And decks with budding leaf the blighted tree,  
There is a life, O spring ! thou can'st not give—  
Shadows thy sunshine cannot chase from me.

What tho' thou scatter off'rings o'er the grave—  
And bid the wither'd stalks again to bloom,  
Thou can'st not give me back the life I crave,  
Nor warm the coldness 'neath the silent tomb.

Oh, God ! there stands at each heart-shrine a stone,  
Whose shadow e'en life's sunshine seems to mock,  
From whose hard centre deeper streams have flown  
Than ever gushed from Horeb's stricken rock.

The stone that pillows Death upon his bed,  
Where mocking flowers flaunt their bloom above,  
Whose roots, alas ! are nourished by the dead,  
And watered by warm, living tears of love.

Ah well, as we all bask in sunshine bright,  
Upon each heart some shadow sure must fall,  
Let not one turn thy morning into night,  
For death is but the common lot of all.

Nor grieve that one belov'd hath run his race,  
Hath found a haven from life's stormy sea,  
Nor think Death harsh who parts us for a space,  
To join us in the long eternity.

I know not how my days are number'd, save  
Some time the woodland's wakened life shall ring,  
And lo, the flowers on a new-made grave  
Shall catch the sunshine of a new-born spring.

*ODE TO ST. CECILIA.*

DELIVERED AT THE FESTIVAL OF NOVEMBER 25, 1879.

From Nature's varied harmony man has caught  
    An utterance for the voices of his heart,  
With drinking ear he listened while she taught,  
    And learned the measures of his tuneful art.  
He heard the music of the roaring wave  
    Loud lash the waters to a wild unrest,  
And lo ! his passion throbs responsive gave,  
    And found an angered echo in his breast.  
Then soothed by whispers of the mountain breeze  
He sighed in echo to the sighing trees ;  
And on his ear the brook's low murmurs rang,  
    That o'er smooth pebbles ran its gentle race,  
And gurgling round the little eddies sang  
    The rippling music of its measured pace.

The zephyrs sighing softly as they passed,  
The voices of the woods, each taught their art,  
Each found a chord responsive in man's breast,  
And stored their treasures deep within his heart.

---

To the ocean's loud murmurs  
Echoed the music of war  
And the chord of fierce passions  
Hath sounded afar.  
While the trumpet's loud clangor,  
The kettle's quick roll,  
Hath fired with courage  
E'en the coward's base soul.  
O'er the field dark clotted  
With blood-rusted gore,  
'Mid the lightnings of battle,  
The thunders of war ;  
All drunk with their valor,  
On, on rush the brave,  
To the sunshine of glory,  
Or the shades of the grave.

---

But ah, when the battle is ended,  
And the moon sadly smiles overhead,  
And war's fierce music hath softened  
To a slow, melting dirge for the dead,  
What sorrows breathe out in its moanings !  
What tears from its cadences start !  
Low cries of despair and of anguish,  
Like the wails of a broken heart.  
Of hearths, it whispers sad fancies,  
That have lost the gay brightness of yore,  
Of homes, whose glad sunshine hath vanished,  
To return, and to cheer them no more.

Ah war, though thy crown is of glory,  
Deep jeweled with deeds of long years,  
Not a deed but hath caused a red ocean  
To be fed by warm rivers of tears.  
Tho' a nation sing out its proud pæans,  
They break not the mother's lone gloom,  
The joy-bells are death-knells of gladness  
Sunk deep with her boy in the tomb.

Such fancies start out from the music,  
Like the wailings of autumn's sad breath,  
When set the bright sun of war's glory  
In the sombre, dark shadows of death.

---

Let gladder strains melt on the ear,  
That breathe not woe nor wan distress,  
That wake no sorrow and no tear,  
But sing alone of loveliness.

'Twas from the voices of the spring,  
The sunny-throated songster's cry,  
That man his love first learned to sing,  
And poured it forth in melody.

Like sunshine poured the music forth,  
And nature gladdened with the strain ;  
'Twas echoed in the ice-bound north,  
And mid the sun-clad hills of Spain.

Oh mellow music of the heart !  
Encircled by thy golden chain,  
The enchanted earth yields to thy art,  
Nor murmurs 'neath thy glowing reign,

Life, sparkling in a radiant light,  
    Beneath thy magic spell appears,  
All glittering with a sunshine bright,  
    That hides its shadows and its tears.

A brighter radiance in the skies,  
    A sweeter music in the stream,  
While over all a glory lies,  
    The mystic glory of a dream.

Immortal love ! tho' in the heart  
    Old age may cool thy eager fire,  
Yet from the twilight echoes start  
    When thou doth sweep the impassioned lyre.

And tho' thy song is dulled by years,  
    Tho' echoed on a broken string,  
Tho' then of joys that live in tears,  
    In saddened accents thou doth sing,

Those days long garnered in Time's sheaf  
    Shall still some hallowed memory bring,  
As autumn's seared and yellow leaf  
    Recalls the glad sunshine of spring.



'Tis thus love's music holds a charm  
When age hath conquered passion's throe,  
It sweeps a chord with touch so warm  
That all the feelings overflow.

---

Now slow strains, but greater, grander,  
Roll upon the ravished ear,  
Strike a chord of deeper meaning,  
"Hope, and faith, and godly fear."  
Low now falt'ring, now loud swelling,  
Hymns of joy and praise arise,  
From the pealing organ flowing  
Like an angel's melodies.

Hail Cecilia, saint immortal !  
'Tis the music of thy choice,  
Thou, whose listening soul and eager  
Caught thy Maker's echoed voice.  
Unto earth to cheer its shadows,  
Strains immortal thou hast given,  
That upon the heart o'erclouded  
Fall like sunshine from the heaven.

For the voice of the Creator

Breathing through thy heavenly strain,

Floating o'er Life's angry billows,

Soothes its restless, troubled main.

As the shell, tho' far from ocean,

Whispers echoes of the sea,

So thy music softly swelling,

Murmurs of eternity.

Murmurs low in church and chapel,

Fills the heart with holy love,

Till we turn from earth's poor glitter

To the golden light above.

Till we fain 'would leave earth's labor,

Leave its woe, its drear unrest,

Wearied, fainting with life's burden,

Sink upon the Saviour's breast.

Bathing in the liquid music,

Ravished with its dreams of light,

Fain the soul would pierce the shadows

Hovering o'er life's clouded night.

Leaving earth, 'twould fain float sunward  
Through the incensed depths of air,  
With the soft strains wafted upward  
On the holy breath of prayer.

---

Through the ages man hath listened,  
Drinking music's mellow strain,  
All enchanted with its power,  
Circled by its golden chain.  
Through the ages many a master  
Swept the strings with glowing hand,  
Every range of human passion  
Touching with a magic wand :

Yet Cecilia, saint immortal !  
Unto thee the crown is given,  
For thy strains are more than earthly,  
Echoing language of the Heaven.  
Thou hast taught a mightier music,  
Breathing life into the clod,  
Lifting man from out his shadows  
To the sunlight of his God.

*CASTLE BUILDING.*

A farmer in the bright and sunny days  
When others sow, did idly dreaming lie,  
Nor dropped his seeds into the furrowed earth,  
But, with veiled eyelids, looked to future days,  
And saw his fields all yellow with the corn  
That waved its crested heads unto the wind ;  
He heard the mower whet his scythe ; and soon  
The bearded grain was garnered into sheaves.  
And then he dreamed of barn and gran'ries stocked  
With fruitful produce of the bounteous earth :  
Of winter, drear without the door ; within  
Made bright and happy by the sunny smiles  
Of child and wife, and yule-log's ruddy glow.

He heard the simple jest and merry laugh,  
And saw bright faces gathered 'round the hearth,  
Reflecting back the cheerful light that made  
The flick'ring shadows dance upon the wall ;  
And heard the timorous wind beat 'gainst the panes,  
As if 'twere chill and frightened in the gloom,  
And wished to warm its coldness at the hearth  
That threw a beacon ray into the night.

But Time flew swiftly by. The farmer woke  
And shook from off himself his idle dreams,  
And rushed into his fields. But lo ! the sun  
Of autumn smiled upon the neighb'ring fields,  
All gilded with the waving corn ; but his  
Were bare, and now it was too late to sow.  
Ah, bitter tears he shed for spring misspent  
In pleasant fancies that could bear no fruit,  
For as he sowed not, neither could he reap ;  
And now a cold and cheerless winter stared  
Gaunt-eyed upon him lacking food and light.

And so we often pass our youth's brief spring,  
Our sowing time, in idle dreams, and build  
From airy nothings castles fair, alas !  
That soon must fall ; with fancies people them,  
And at the windows smile the face of friends,  
And all whom we hold dear, all, all are there,  
And all that life can give of joy, but naught  
Of care, naught wanting save reality.  
But soon the autumn comes, our castles fall,  
And we with ready sickles in our hands  
Stand weeping o'er bare fields and ruins of dreams,  
For lo ! there is no corn for us to reap.

*BY THE SEASIDE.*

I.

By the seaside the children are playing,  
Sweet sound their shouts from the strand,  
As they list what the ripples are saying,  
That lave their white feet on the sand.

In the morning of life and the sunshine  
That gleams o'er the beginning of day,  
The waves wear a joy-tinted splendor,  
And low murmur a mystical lay.

To the children they sing of the future,  
As they waft them bright dreams from the sea,  
And they sing that the sun will shine brighter  
In the days that are yet to be.

Ah, children, tho' the sun may shine brighter  
As it speeds towards its zenith and noon,  
Yet still will its shadows grow deeper  
That will fall and o'ershadow you soon.

So sing out, gay hearts, in the morning,  
Among the bright dreams that you weave ;  
For from you life's song is far sweeter  
Than when sung by the gray-beards at eve.

## II.

By the seaside two lovers are straying,  
While high mounts the sun in the sky ;  
But the children no longer are playing,  
For their morning of life hath passed by.

But the song they heard is not ended ;  
'Tis of love that the glad waves now sigh ;  
To these young hearts it comes with sweet freshness,  
Though 'tis old as the heavens on high.



And it tints with its wonderful glory  
The earth, and the sky up above ;  
And life, with the enchantment of story,  
Gleams out in the brightness of love.

What matters the past or the future—  
“ Oh tarry, bright sun, in thy flight,”  
Sighs the lover ; “ The moment is blissful,  
Yet still dost thou fly towards the night ! ”

### III.

But the sun heeds not in its journey,  
The long shadows soon slant from the west ;  
And an old man, bowed low with life's burden,  
Sinks down by the ocean for rest.

The waves have lost their gay music,  
'Tho' life's song still sounds from the surge ;  
'Tis a sigh for the dead—'tis an echo—  
A song of the past, and a dirge !

And now, with sad eyes, and with tender,  
The old man weeps o'er a past page !  
For the ghost of young life, in its brightness,  
Still flits through the shadows of age.

All dead—the bright hopes of his childhood !  
Dead ! dead the loved lips that he pressed !  
And alone he lives with sad fancies,  
While he longs for the evening, and rest !

For when shadows have swept out the brightness,  
And the gloom has o'ermantled the day,  
Then to Him the dear Father calleth  
His children to rest from their play.

\* \* \* \* \*

Still wash the waves on the shingle—  
The music still sounds as of yore ;  
But the shadows of evening have fallen,  
The old man lies dead on the shore !

*TRANSLATION FROM HORACE.*

*Epistolarum iv, Lib. 1.*

Albi, nostrorum sermonum candide judex,  
Quid nunc te dicam facere in regione Pedena?

Thou, O Albius ever smiling,  
Judging me with frownless face,  
How art thou thine hours beguiling  
In thy Pedan country-place?  
Dost thou write in thrilling numbers?  
Or, musing wander in thy grove,  
Whilst the mind that never slumbers  
Garners thoughts fresh-winged from Jove?  
At thy birth, 'fore thou could'st ask it,  
Gods did shower blessings kind,  
Made thy form a fitting casket  
For thy shining, gem-like mind.  
Fortune did her favors send;  
Nature taught thee how to spend.

Who, for child at natal hour,  
    Could ask a soul from fault more free?  
Who could wish a sweeter shower  
    Than has rained its wealth on thee?  
Yet in gladness or in sorrow,  
    Amid days of joy or pain,  
Live—as if the sun's bright morrow,  
    Ne'er would shine for thee again.  
Then as death comes near and nearer,  
    Smiling shall his greeting be,  
He shall bring a morning clearer  
    Than e'er dawned on earth for thee.

When thy mirth doth conquer breeding,  
    Come thou 'neath my shady bough,  
Thou shalt find a sleek hog feeding  
    In an Epicurean slough.

*A CHORUS FROM THE ŒDIPUS TYR-  
ANNUS.*

Ω Διὸς ἄδυεπῆς φάτι, τίς ποτε τὰς πολυχρόσου

Πυθῶνος ἀγλαὰς ἔβας

θήβας, \* \* \* \*

O, Oracle of Jove, thou sweetly speaking !

Why camest thou from Delphi to this shore ?

Behold a heart in fear and trembling seeking

What fateful future holds within its store :

First thee, Jove-born Minerva, I implore,

And thy fair sister, circled on her throne

By radiance of a beauty all her own ;

To thee, Far-Darter, I my heart outpour.

When former evil, o'er the city falling,

Ye chased away the brooding clouds of woe ;

Now come, O Gods, unto me sadly calling,

And strike no longer though deserved the blow.

For lo, my people, weakened in their sorrow,

Have lost the vigor and the strength of yore,

Weep in the day, forgetful of the morrow,

And saddened earth will yield to them no more ;

And women on the bed of child-birth lying,  
    With death give life unto a joyless world ;  
Wan people swifter than the eagles flying  
    Toward Pluto's realms of endless night are hurled.  
The city that was thronged with happy faces,  
    Grows blank and lone, scarce echoes to a tread,  
And infants stamped with sorrow's early traces,  
    Unwept upon the barren earth lie dead.  
Wives, matrons silver-haired, about the altar  
    Uplift their hands in sorrow's silent prayer ;  
Give ear unto the sighs their sad hearts falter,  
    And take them, pitying God, within your care !  
Heart-breaking groans and piercing shrieks upwelling,  
    Slow rise, uplifted by a famished air,  
Better than words, or signs, or prayers telling,  
    Of deeper anguish than poor man can bear.  
Then lend us aid, O Jove-beloved daughter !  
    Send fair-eyed Help to ease us of our pain,  
Give peace unto this sad life's troubled water,  
    And bid earth from her ashes smile again !

*THREE QUERIES.*

“ Why weep you, silver-headed age,  
When dreaming o’er life’s brightest page ;  
Why tearful gaze with shadowed eyes  
O’er youth’s dim-visioned paradise ? ”

“ But tears for happy memories—why ? ”  
Age answers only with a sigh.

“ O why, sweet maiden-bride, these tears  
That stain the threshold of glad years ?  
A rain-bowed smile—ah ! there must be  
Some cloud that melts to tears in thee ! ”  
And for these tears no answer why—  
Save the soft, faint echo of a sigh.

“ O poet, why when thy heart is light  
Dost sing of shadows and of night ?  
The lark sings blithely, clear and loud,  
Tho’ shrouded in the morning cloud,  
Sad thrill thy notes, O poet why ? ”  
And still the answer of a sigh.

“ O heart, probe not the source of sighs,  
And question not life’s mysteries ! ”

*LIFE.*

A little stream that rises with the sun,  
And babbles onward from its tiny grot,  
Its surface dimpled with a laughing smile,  
On, on past childhood's dreamy banks of flowers.

A broader, quicker stream, a warmer sky,  
A swifter flowing through sweet-scented fields,  
Whose tender shoots and promises of fruit  
May bud and blossom, or may droop and die.

Still onward through glad fields of bending grain,  
And fields all barren, choked with idle weeds,  
'Mid blended songs of sadness and of joy,  
The harvest falls beneath the mower's scythe.



Now westward, westward towards the setting sun,  
With scarce an echo of its former life,  
Flowing slowly onward through the wintry fields,  
Pale, bloomless fields of hoar frost and of snow.

Yet sometimes falls a slender-threaded ray  
Aslant upon the stilly stream that blends  
With murmured echoes of a past, and brings  
'Mid dreamy stillness a sweet smile of spring.

The flowers, the sweet innocence, the bliss,  
With what a yearning our fond hearts they fill !  
But who can stem Life's restless flowing tide ?  
Those days, those days come back to us no more.

*THE POET'S SONG.*

When the poet is young he tries to sing,  
But emotion conquers his singing ;  
And up from the earth no song can he fling,  
While about him all heaven is ringing.

When his passionate heart grows weary, grows old,  
When emotion has smothered its sighing,  
When the warm pulse of youth has grown listless and cold,  
When the brightness of day is dying,

Then only the poet can pour forth his song ;  
He moulds but the echo of feeling,  
For the sun of his youth is too bright and too strong,  
He sings when the shadows are stealing.

Do you hear in his song a sorrowful strain  
Like the moaning sea sobbing and sighing,  
Does there blend with his rapture an echo of pain ?  
'Tis a dirge for the day that is dying.

*LIGHT AND SHADE.*

From gurgling brook, and laughing, sparkling stream,  
The sunshine drinks the shadows that must fall  
In rain and darkness. When the storm is spent  
Fond nature freshened, smiles from out her tears,  
And flowers lift their drooping heads and breathe  
A sweeter fragrance over all. The sun  
But shrouds himself in shadows to burst forth  
With brighter radiance on the gladdened earth.

So joy and sorrow, hand in hand, walk through  
The brightness and the shadow we call life,  
Firm linked unto each other. What is woe ?  
'Tis but the sunshine that has drunk the cloud ;  
And when our grief has flowed in rainy tears,  
Joy bids our hearts to rise and smile again.  
So ever through the rolling years ; for day  
Shall fade into the darkness, and the night  
Conceive, and from her murky womb bring forth  
The new-born day, that soon must fade again.

*AN AFTER VACATION SIGH.*

She gave to me a blushing rose  
    Fresh plucked in dewy morn ;  
With eager hand I grasped the gift,  
    But ah, I felt a thorn !

The flower slow faded day by day,  
    Till of its bloom bereft,  
No more I pressed a lovely rose,  
    The thorn alone was left.

Ah ! so my love hath passed away,  
    Its sweetness, not its pain :  
The lovely rose is faded—gone,  
    The thorn doth still remain.

*TO THE CHILDREN SINGING CHRISTMAS  
HYMNS.*

Sing us songs, O little children !  
Soft airs let your fancies weave ;  
Sweeter sound they in life's morning  
Than the old men's song at eve.

Dearer, too, unto the Father,  
For on you the Saviour smiled,  
When He likened His own kingdom  
To the kingdom of a child.

You can draw us nearer Heaven,  
Singing clear your hymns of praise ;  
You can make our souls yet stronger,  
You can teach us God's own ways.

Once a great saint, good and holy,  
Fallen 'mid wrong thoughts and wild,  
Was led gently back from error  
By a smiling angel child.

For he wished to pierce with reason  
God's own veil of mystery ;  
Tho' in faith our loving Father  
Bade us e'er as children be.

Wrapped in doubt and shadows gloomy,  
Walked he by the tossing main ;  
And in darkness prayed the Father  
Send him light and faith again.

Looked he down along the sea-shore,  
Saw a child upon the sand  
Pouring water in a hollow  
Fashioned by its tiny hand.

Smiling spoke the Saint, and fondly  
Giving the child's head a pat,  
" You cannot pour ocean's waters  
In a little hole like that."

Spoke the child, with mild reproof :  
" Still more foolish thou than I,  
Who, with man's poor bounded vision,  
Seek the secrets of the sky.

“ Sooner shall this tiny hollow  
    Hold the wild, unresting sea,  
Than thy little mind, O mortal,  
    Hold thy God’s infinity ! ”

Spoke the angel thus and vanished.  
    To the good Saint, from that day,  
O’er reason’s feebleness glimmer  
    Shone the light of faith alway.

Teach us faith too, little children,  
    Singing clear your hymns of praise,  
You can draw us nearer Heaven,  
    You can teach us God’s own ways.

Sing us, then, the dear old legends  
    Till good-will on earth doth reign ;  
Till the holy tide of Christmas  
    Bears the Christ to us again.

*IN MEMORIAM.*

REV. WM. WHITEFORD, S. J.

Beneath a white stone, cold he lies,  
Who drew so warm a breath,  
And oh, those fine and radiant eyes  
Are close shut in by death.

How could death's cruel angel seize  
On eyes so kind and true?  
Is it by robbing such as these  
That heaven beams so blue?

Cold science says—the fittest live,  
My heart says, 'tis a lie,  
He was the fittest to survive,  
Yet he did fade and die.



In his fair prime he bowed his head,  
This leader among men ;  
So strong, so good—yet he is dead,  
What meaneth science then ?

Yet if I could I would not weep  
So loud in wild despair,  
To penetrate into his sleep,  
Or wake him, 'lying there.

If any cry could break his rest  
'Twould be a cry of pain,  
But who would drag him from the blest  
To suffer here again.

He was the fittest to survive,  
“ Yet God be praised,” I cry,  
For he who was so fit to live  
Was fitter still to die.

*THE RULER OF CAPHARNAUM.*

The sun rose on Capharnaum, and the light  
Swift broke in crimson splendor from the clouds,  
And flashed on turrets, gleamed on palace walls,  
And sped its golden arrows through the gloom  
Of darkened chambers, heralding the morn.  
Sleep held its silent sway no moment more,  
But fled before the conqueror. The hum  
Of wakened life came forth from opening doors,  
And men passed out and thronged into the streets,  
And bustled to the marts, and bought and sold,  
And so took up the busy cares of day.

One palace was there, lifting mighty walls,  
That answered not unto the wakening light  
With opened portals ; but with windows barred  
Frowned at the gladness of the early morn,  
As if the jealous night had crept within  
To lurk in gloom until the sun was dead.

The gay beams lit its turrets, but within  
Death's shadow swept the mirthful light away,  
And fell on hearts that beat 'mid hope and fear,  
For one young life, the light of those wide walls,  
The son, the heir, who lay in stillness now.  
No smile, no single word of comfort came  
From those white lips to cheer the watchers sad  
Beside that couch ; naught broke the silence save  
The painful hard-drawn gasps for fitful breath,  
That fell like death-knells on the fearful ear.

Ah, who can tell the anguish, the keen pain,  
That pierced the mother's heart as she bent o'er  
The couch where still and listless lay her son,  
Nor knew her love, nor felt her twining arms,  
Nor saw the eager glistening eyes that sought  
For one faint smile, the ears that bent to catch  
Some echo of the laughter that was mute ;  
But ah, none came, and with a sobbing sigh  
She lifted up her tear-bedimméd eyes  
And spoke unto her husband : " Oh, my lord,

My lord, he knows me not, he knows me not !  
Death shuts me from his eyes, and oh, no gleam  
Of love shines through the darkness unto him.  
I fold him in my arms, but only feel  
The spirit passing from the mortal clay ;  
No man can help him now, but only God.  
Go forth, my lord, I hear a Rabbi great  
Doth come this way, and some say he is God,  
And doth prove his divineness by his gifts  
Of life ; ask thou this dear boy's life of him,  
And if he grant my prayer so that our son  
Shall live, I will believe him to be God."

And forth the ruler went to find our Lord,  
And men made passage for him seeing his face  
Was sorrowful. And passed he by the gates,  
And walked among the gladness of the fields,  
Amid the tossing golden-headed grain  
In bitterness. The songs of happy birds,  
The soft, contented murmur of the brook,  
But jarred upon him, mocking at his woe ;

For his sad heart seemed on that smiling day  
To be alone, and lonely in its grief.  
For so our sorrows wrap us like a cloud,  
And so grief looms and overshadows life  
Till joy seems as a pale and wandering light  
That beckons but to places desolate.

Yet on the ruler strode, still on and on,  
In stormy grief, and now in mute despair ;  
And as he walked with downcast, brooding eyes  
A presence came upon him like a calm,  
And looking upward he beheld our Lord,  
And knew Him. Then with supplicating eyes  
He spoke his grief in simple words, and prayed  
Our Lord to come with him. But Jesus said :  
“ Save ye see wonders ye will not believe ! ”  
But still the ruler murmured, while his eyes  
Plead with the eager eloquence of tears,  
“ O Sir, come with me ere my child be dead.”

O blessed thing, that human means, this love  
Of man for man, and life's quick fading grief

Can lead us faltering step by step to God.  
How many like this ruler find their God  
Through sorrow, pain and tears ; led not so much  
By love of Him, as love of lesser things,  
Of brother and of self ; so few that give  
Their joy to God, but only their distress.  
Yet on the sorrowing ruler Jesus turned  
Divine compassionate eyes, that in their depths  
Mirrored the world's wide woe, and gently said :  
Go thy way, for lo, thy son doth live."

Then came a joy unto the ruler's heart  
That loosed the tears that grief had stored within,  
The while he watched his child, and swept away  
All brooding sorrow from him, like a harp  
That soft winds play on, did his heart respond  
To nature and her gladness. Quick he turned  
In thankfulness, yet found no words for thanks,  
And with fleet steps sped onward towards his home ;  
And all things sang to him, all things were glad,  
But rose a soft and zephyrous breeze, that blew

In merry wrinkles o'er the wayward brook,  
And skimmed with laughter o'er the bending corn ;  
A balmy breeze that to the ruler seemed  
To sweep all sorrow from the world, that yet  
A little while had been all desolate.

When night stole on him with its silent tread  
He slept in peace beneath the shining stars,  
And rose in sweet refreshment with the sun.  
And as he walked with rapid, hopeful strides,  
His servants met him, saying : " Thy son doth live."'  
And spake the ruler : " What hour mended he ?"  
And answer made they : " Lord, 'twas yesterday  
At seventh hour the fever sudden ceased."  
The master knew 'twas then that Jesus said,  
" Thy son doth live," and broke a sudden light  
Upon his soul that chased all doubt away,  
"*And he himself believed and all his house.*"

'Mid sounds of music and of revel came  
The ruler to his home, whence death had fled,  
And richer gifts he bore than that he sought,

For with him brought he words of endless life.  
What we call life or soon or late must yield  
Unto death's angel. All the hard-won skill  
Of skillfullest physician can but bid  
The dreaded angel pause but for a space.

Death came again unto the ruler's house,  
And bore its dwellers one by one away.  
And passing ever through the winding streets  
Impartial knocked at cot and palace door  
And beckoned to his marked ones ; knocked and knocked,  
Until no more the morning sun awoke  
The city from its sleeping. Silent now  
The hum of voices and of tramping feet ;  
The palace walls, the turrets high that flashed  
Their glory to the early sun, low lie  
On earth's dead level with the mould of cot.  
That city proud hath bowed its head to time,  
And crumbled 'neath his footsteps into dust ;  
Its site unknown, its name had faded, save  
'Twas made immortal by our Lord—the Christ.













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